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# Land at Box End West of Bedford

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## SITE PROMOTION

on behalf of BDW Trading Limited

*Bedford is a sought after place to live in. The growth of this area forms a key part of the growth strategy for the Oxford Cambridge Arc that will help drive economic growth in the area.*

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# INTRODUCTION

This Vision Document has been prepared on behalf of BDW Trading Limited to present its scheme for sustainable growth to the west of Bedford. We believe that this Site could provide a key element of the Council's vision for new homes based on a sustainable new community.

## THE SITE

The Site comprises of land covering 70 hectares to the west of Bedford. The Site is located on Box End Road, to the north of Kempston. The Site is divided into two parcels by the B560. It is well related to Kempston and Bedford

## BACKGROUND

The Vision document has been prepared on behalf of BDW Trading Limited, who have an interest in the land to the west of Bedford, which is able to provide for the long-term sustainable future of the area as well as delivering a range of significant benefits.

The area is well connected to central Bedford, especially through recent developments to the west of the town and Kempston. The land is able to deliver approximately 1,150 homes (including affordable), a mixed use local centre, a primary school and extensive sports/recreation facilities.

We have set out the high-level proposals for the Site in this document which have been led by best practice approaches to design and placemaking. Careful consideration has been given as to how the Site integrates with the surrounding landscape and communities.

The role of this document is:

- To set out a vision for the growth of Bedford to the west and a summary of the benefits this would bring to the wider community;
- To set out a clear approach to development that demonstrates how growth can be unlocked on the Site.



 Site Boundary (70 hectares)

Fig.1 - Aerial View of the Site



BDW is the UK's largest housebuilder and encompasses both the Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes brands. As a company they are committed to driving the highest standard of design, construction, customer services and sustainability within our industry.

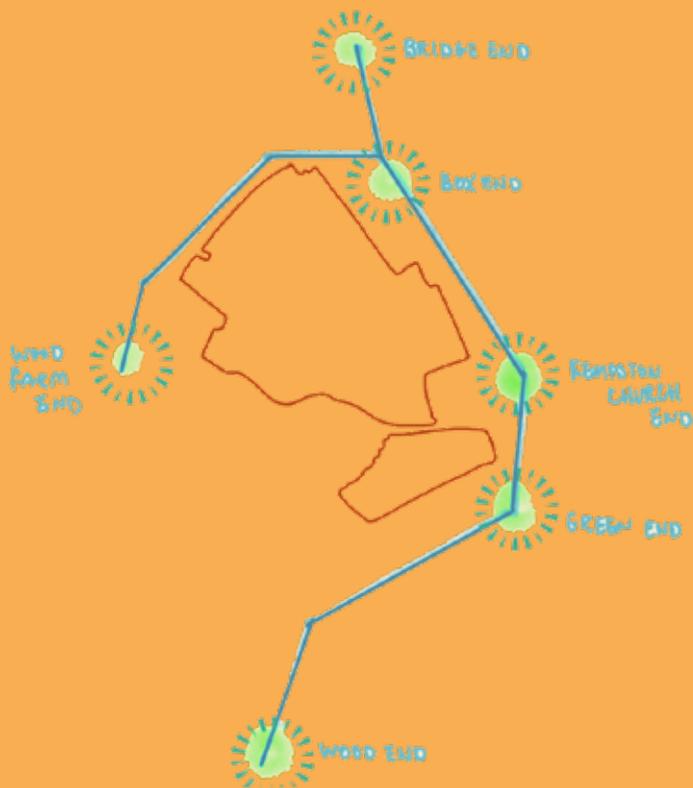


BDW take a collaborative and community focused approach in order to create vibrant, sustainable places where people want to live and work.



# SITE ANALYSIS

We have carried out a desktop analysis of the Site alongside a site visit in order to gain a better understanding of the key constraints and become familiar with the Site's spatial and physical surroundings.



## BUILT FORM AND CHARACTER

Bedford grew in the 19th and 20th century from a small market town into a large industrial town. Rings of Victorian housing and 20th century estates surround the historic core and Kempston grew as a significant suburb to the South West of the town. The area around the site is defined by a number of small hamlets called 'Ends', each with a distinctive character. The Site sits in between three of the historic 'Ends'. These settlements vary in character and are interspersed with listed buildings.

- Box End lies to the northeast corner of the Site. It is a small hamlet;
- West End is located to the northwest corner of the Site and is made up of a handful of dispersed buildings and farmsteads;
- Church End lies to the southeast of the Site, around All Saints Church. Views of the Church tower can be found from the high point in the site. Kempston Cemetery is located to the south of the Site.

The built form of each of the 'End' settlements has a varied character, containing buildings from a range of eras including 19th and 20th century. Notable buildings include, Box End House, West End Farmhouse, Top Farmhouse, The Clock House and the Grade I listed Church of All Saints. The setting of these buildings will need to be carefully considered, with appropriate density, massing and sensitive landscaping.

The Site contains no designated archaeological assets. The setting of designated archaeological assets in the wider area has been assessed; and are not considered sensitive to change by the proposed Development.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The landscape in the area has a rolling topography, with a character defined by its relationship with the River Great Ouse valley and the hills to the north.

- The Site sits in an urban fringe location and there is a clear intervisibility between the site and Bedford. From the high point in the site there are views of Bedford Town Centre, industrial units and All Saints Church tower;
- The Bedford Borough Character Assessment defines most of the site as lying within, '5D: North Marston Clay Vale landscape' character area and adjacent to the 'Clay Farmlands' to the north and 'Limestone Valleys' to the south;
- The Site sits in the Forest of Marston Vale, a community forest project and is adjacent to two green infrastructure opportunity zones;
- The Site has an open character, gently rising to a high point in the middle of the larger parcel;
- The Site is enclosed by hedgerows along its northern and eastern boundary. A handful of trees can be found in the northern part of the site;
- High voltage cables run east-west across the Site and have an urbanising effect;
- The southern parcel lies to the north of Kempston Cemetery;
- The River Great Ouse is located c.480m east of the site. The majority of the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (i.e. low probability of flooding);
- Two small watercourses run through the west and south of the site and a small area of Flood Zone 2 is associated with the stream running in the southern part of the Site.

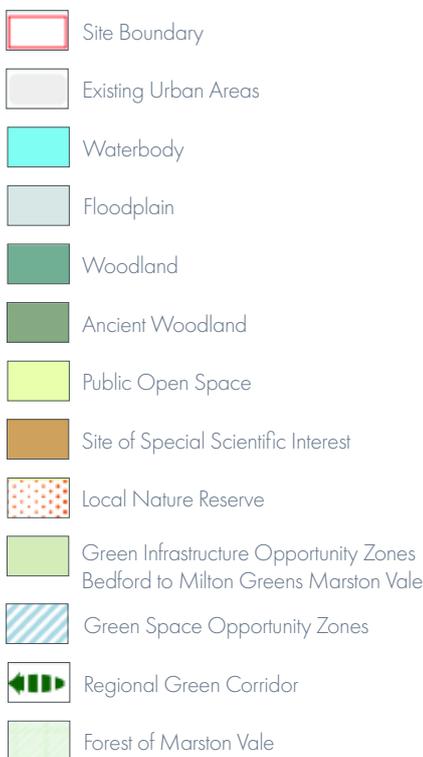


Fig.2 - Landscape Analysis Diagram



## MOVEMENT

The Site is well connected to local and regional movement networks. There is the potential to support sustainable transport modes using the network of footpaths connecting the area to Kempston, Bedford and the surrounding villages, river corridor and wider countryside.

- A network of footpaths and cycleways can be found along the river corridor and connecting through Kempston;
- The John Bunyan Trail runs through the Site and connects to the North Bedford Heritage Trail;
- Box End Road lies to the east of the Site and connects to the regional road network via the A428. At Kempston the A428 connects to the the Bedford Southern Bypass A421;

- West End Road lies to the north and the B560 defines the western boundary;
- Bedford Train Station is located in the centre of Bedford and is accessible from the Site;
- There is a bus stop located on Box End Road, that connects to the town centre.

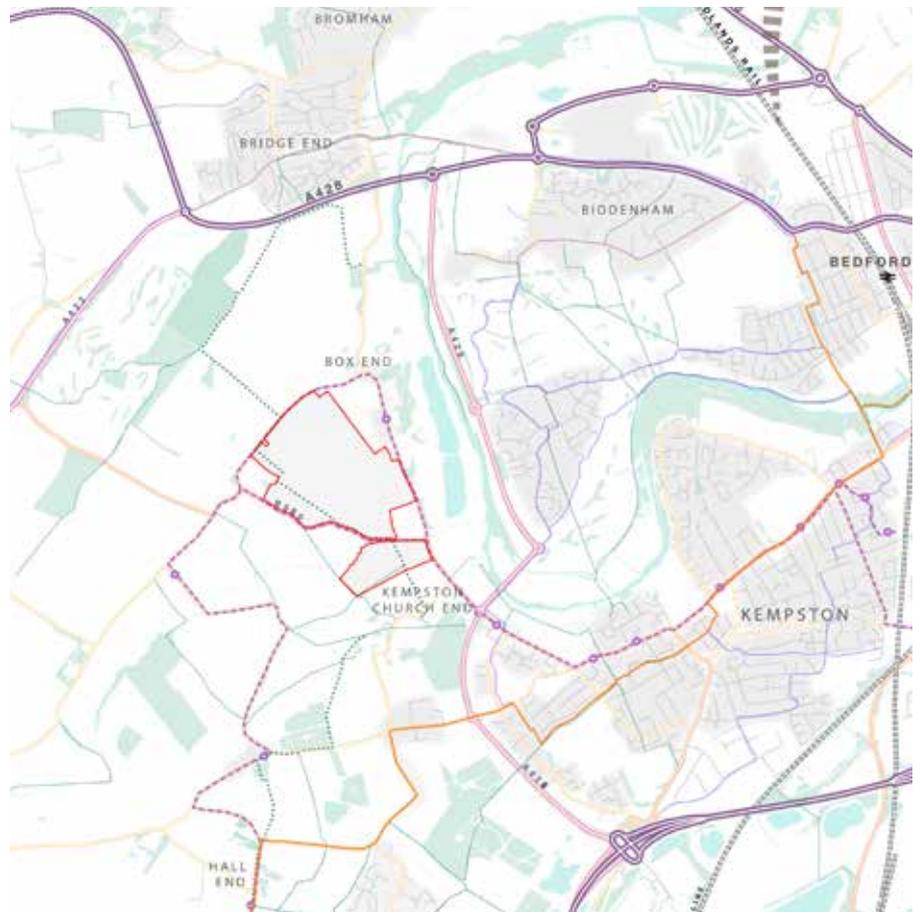


Fig.3 - Movement and Transport Plan

## LOCAL FACILITIES

The Site is well served by facilities and amenities in the surrounding area, with Kempston providing a wide range of shops and services.

- To the east of the site lies Box End Park, a popular water sports and leisure venue, formed around a disused gravel pit, which includes a restaurant and corporate facilities such as meeting rooms;
- A range of shops, a post office, dentist and doctors surgery can be found in Kempston;
- In addition, there are several gyms and sports clubs in Kempston;
- Two primary schools are located nearby in Great Denham and Kempston;
- A secondary school is located to the west of Kempston - Kempston Challenger Academy.



Fig.4 - Local Facilities Plan



# SITE PHOTOS







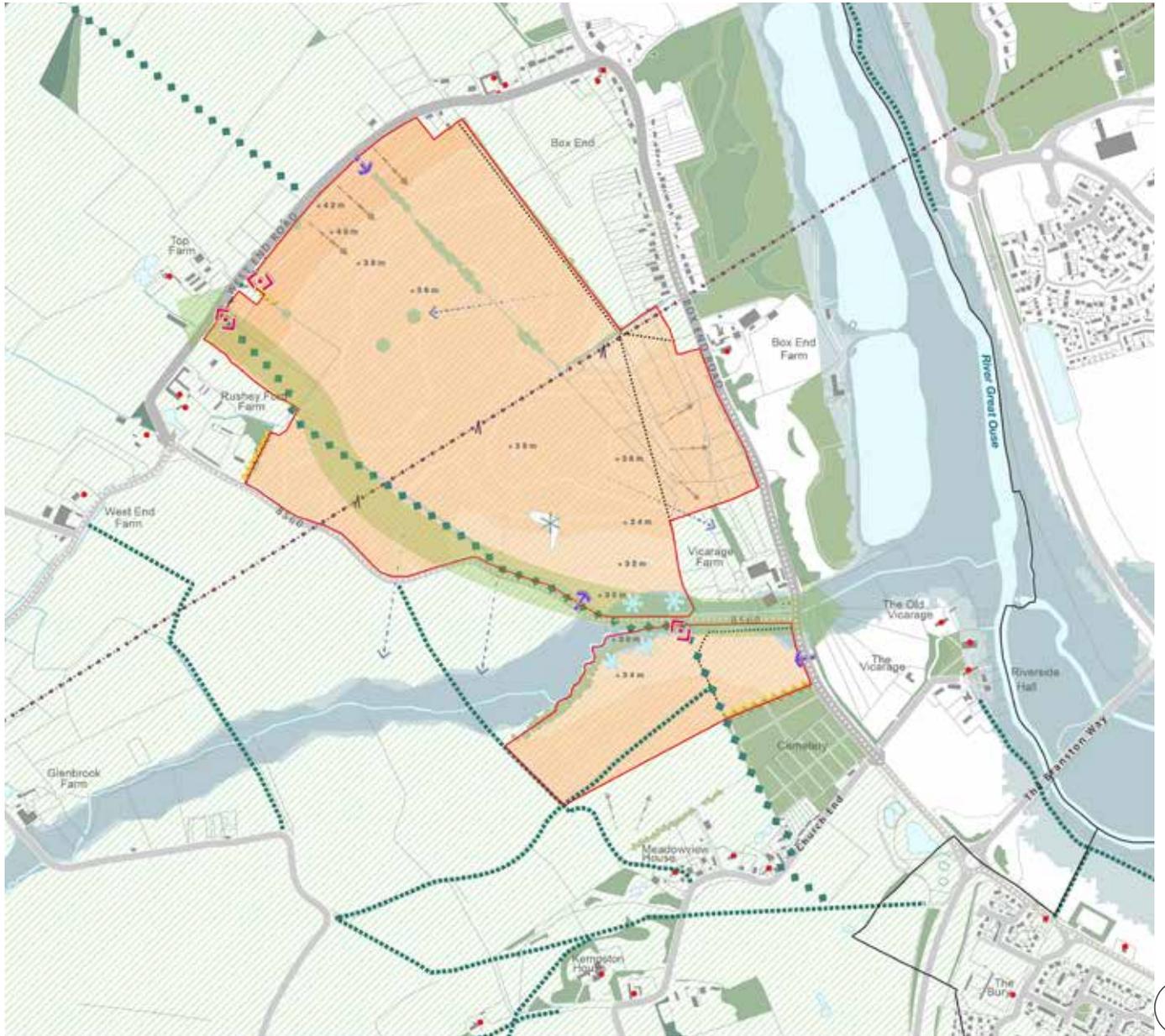
# OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

There are a variety of opportunities that arise from development to the west of Bedford that support the Site promotion.

## KEY SITE CONSIDERATIONS:

- The Site is well related to Bedford to the east and Kempston to the south and will benefit from the services and amenities of these areas;
- The land sits closely with Box End and West End to the north and the relationship with these settlements will need to be handled sensitively as part of the proposals;
- The Site has an open character, gently rising to a high point in the middle part of the larger parcel, from which there is an opportunity to structure views from the high point to the Church tower;
- The Site lies in the valley of the River Great Ouse, and the green infrastructure should respond to the character of the valley and larger area;
- Two small watercourses run through the west and south of the site and there is the opportunity to enhance these features as part of the green infrastructure strategy;
- The Site has a small number of trees and hedgerows, and these should be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals;
- There is the opportunity to improve active travel along Box End Road, which provides an important connection between the site, Kempston and Bedford;
- There is an opportunity to realign the B560 to support green infrastructure or improved movement connections.

Fig.6 - Opportunities and Constraints Plan



- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  Red Line Boundary                 |  Listed Buildings                      |  Waterbody                            |
|  Key Road Infrastructure           |  Public Open Space                     |  Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3        |
|  Secondary Road Infrastructure     |  Woodland                              |  Sensitive Settlement Edges           |
|  Bus Routes and Bus Stops          |  Existing on-site vegetation and trees |  Electricity Transmission Line Pylons |
|  Public Rights of Way              |  Topography and 2m Contours            |  Overhead Electricity Pylons          |
|  The John Bunyan Walking Trail     |  Existing Built Environment            |  Forest of Marston Vale               |
|  Existing Vehicular Access Points  |  Steep Topography                      |  Historic Landfill Area               |
|  Existing Pedestrian Access Points |  Key Long Distance Views               |  Bedford Green Wheel Link             |
|   |   |  Potential Suds Areas                 |



# STRATEGIC GROWTH

Bedford is a strategic growth area in the Oxford – Cambridge Arc. The Current Local Plan for Bedford Borough Council sets out an approach to growth in and around Bedford to 2030. A new Local Plan is currently being written to structure growth to 2040.

We believe that the proposals for the west of Bedford can form part of the development strategy for the emerging Bedford Borough Local Plan and the Arc Spatial Framework. The proposals within the plans demonstrate the benefits of unlocking development to the west.

## LOCAL PLAN 2040

- Consultation underway to shape the future growth of Bedford leading to a development strategy until 2040;
- The consultation document presents options, including intensification of Bedford Town Centre, development to the west of the Town and new settlements.

## ARC SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

- Will provide a spatial development strategy to 2050;
- The strategic priorities for the plan have been set;
- The policy options are likely to be consulted on in early 2022;
- A draft Plan is likely to be published in Autumn 2022.

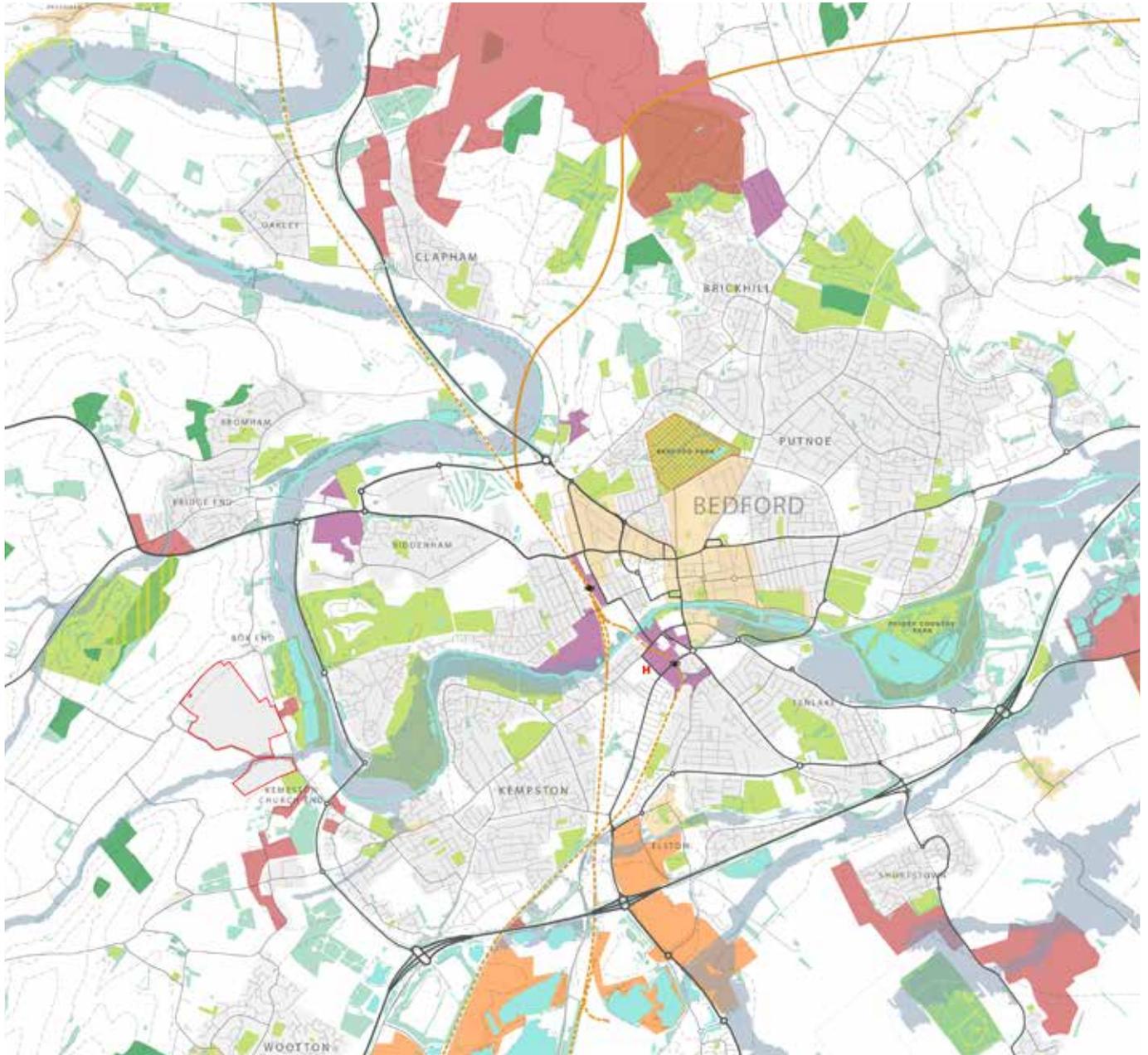
## “LOOK WEST”

The proposals for this Site have been considered in relation to the wider strategic development opportunities in the area. The team have looked at the strategic allocations in the Local Plan and the other proposals that have been put forward as part of the recent Call for Sites. We believe that delivering a significant level of development to the west of Bedford offers considerable advantages over development options in other areas.

Development at West Bedford would:

- Be well related to the facilities and amenities of Kempston and West Bedford;
- Be accessible to Bedford Town Centre through active travel;
- Be located on land which already has an urbanised character through Box End Water Park, infrastructure and views of Bedford;
- Provide new facilities and amenities for residents of Box End, West End and Church End;
- Be on land that is unconstrained by major constraints, especially in comparison with other development sites;
- Provide a significant opportunity for new green infrastructure that relates to strategic objectives, such as green infrastructure opportunity zones and contribute to the objectives of the Forest of Marston Vale.

Fig.7 - Strategic Growth Map of Bedford



- |   |                                     |   |   |   |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
|  | Borough Boundaries                  |  | Railway Line                            |  | Local Nature Reserve                               |
|  | Land opportunity at West of Bedford |  | Indicative East-West Rail Link Proposal |  | Registered Park and Garden                         |
|  | Existing Built Environment          |  | Waterbody                               |  | Conservation Area                                  |
|  | Primary Road Infrastructure         |  | Public Open Space                       |  | Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)         |
|  | Secondary Road Infrastructure       |  | Ancient Woodland                        |  | Housing Allocation Sites (Bedford Local Plan 2030) |
|  | Railway Stations                    |  | Woodland                                |  | Call for Sites - Site Promoted for Housing         |
|   |                                     |  | Flood Zone                              |  | Call for Sites - Site Promoted for Employment      |



# VISION & MASTERPLAN

BDW are committed to creating an aspirational project that would deliver a new community with a positive and long-term legacy for the area.

We have established a site wide vision, which has evolved in consideration to the Site and best practice approaches, including Local and National Guidance and design standards. The proposals for the Site are underpinned by an exemplary approach to green infrastructure, placemaking and environmental standards.

We are in the early stages of the process and we view this as an early vision, which sets out the key issues we think will be important in the process.

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLY

BDW are committed to minimising the impacts of their operations and safeguarding the environment is a key starting point.

Future development will need to be resilient to climate change and incorporate innovative features to reduce carbon emissions and support climate adaption. This will include more efficient building, flood resilience and support for sustainable travel. The vision sets out to establish the right environment for future development.

### THE DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Create a low carbon development that optimises the efficient use of new technology and high energy efficient building standards;
- Meet the most up-to-date requirements for energy efficiency and CO2 reduction to ensure its environmental impacts in the context of achieving "carbon neutrality by 2030" is minimised;
- Support active movement across the site and wider area to promote carbon reduction and healthier lifestyles for all in the community.



Fig.8 - National Model Design Guide MHCLG

## LANDSCAPE & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The development proposals will be landscape led, creating a series of beautiful and multifunctional open spaces. These will bring a range of benefits, including biodiversity, sustainable drainage, play, recreation and well-being. An extensive network of green places would be an integral part of the scheme with green streets parks and wildlife areas that support health, well-being, biodiversity and water management.

### THE DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Build on the Site’s natural features and those of the surrounding landscape such as Hanger Wood and the Great Ouse Valley;
- Support a district wide approach to green infrastructure, supporting enhanced connections to the river and Bedford Town Centre and strategic projects such as Forest of Marston Vale;
- Provide biodiversity net gain in a robust approach to surface water drainage;
- Enhance the existing landscape structure, extend and link landscapes on the Site and beyond;
- Provide a significant green corridor along the west of the site, with the potential to enhance the existing features of the Site, such as the water body / drainage ditch;
- Provide an attractive parkland feature in the pylon corridor running east – west across the Site;
- Potential to provide a green buffer in the southern parcel, to separate the Development from Kempston;
- Use planting to support benefits to the microclimate and minimise the ‘heat island effect’;
- Improve access to green infrastructure, with new footpaths, cycleways and green streets for the enjoyment and health of all.

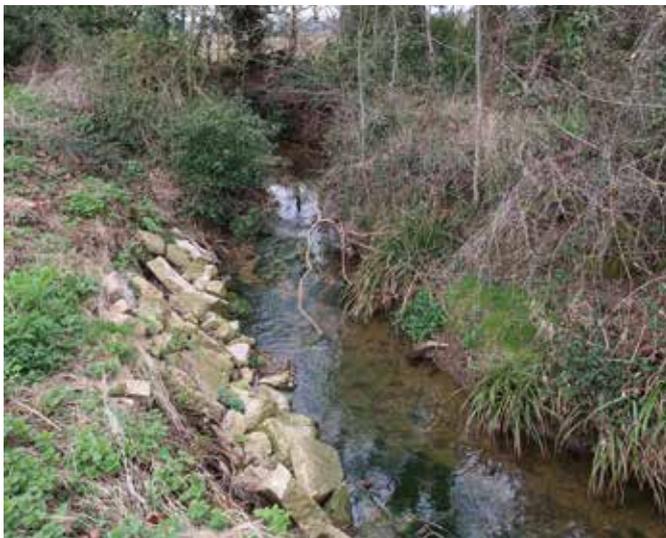


Fig.9 - Stream to the south of the Site



Fig.10 - Open space a Willow Grove



BDW are committed to minimising the impacts of their operations. Safeguarding the environment, with specific consideration for biodiversity protection and enhancement is a key principle that is applied to all sites. BDW work in partnership with the RSPB with a mission is to improve the way in which wildlife is incorporated into developments by giving nature a home. This also ensures that health and mental well-being priorities are supported, which is becoming increasingly important for homeowners.



## PLACE MAKING

The new Development would be a well-designed and beautiful place that builds on the existing character of the area while establishing its own distinct and enduring sense of place.

### THE DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Create a high quality, inclusive and safe built environment;
  - Protect and respond to the local landscape character and historic built environment;
  - Establish its own recognisable character, which builds upon the character of the landscape, the nearby 'Ends' and Kempston;
  - Create attractive and well-designed buildings that are adaptable to changing needs over a lifetime;
  - Create attractive streets and high quality public spaces that support sustainable movement and community interaction;
  - Develop a safe and secure environment by designing the new neighbourhoods in line with the principles promoted in Designing Out Crime;
- Provide a wide choice of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of the area and create a mixed and balanced community;
  - Provide new facilities and amenities, including a primary school and a multi-functional local centre creating high-quality spaces accessible to new and existing communities.

Fig.11 - Barratts Development at Marston Park



## SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

The new Development would be designed to reduce dependence on the car and support sustainable and healthy lifestyles. The Development will be designed to promote sustainable modes of transport both within and outside the Site.

### THE DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Create a network of attractive and well-designed streets and spaces that are well connected;
  - Encourage sustainable travel, making journeys by public transport, walking and cycling more attractive;
  - Provide easy access across the Development and into the existing footpath and cycleway network. Pedestrian and cycle connections to the Ends will allow existing residents to benefit from the new facilities;
  - Explore the realignment of the B560 to optimise green infrastructure connections and placemaking opportunities;
- Deliver generous cycling and walking infrastructure - including opportunities to improve active movement along Box End Road to Kempston and Bedford via Branston Way;
  - Support investment for improvements to existing highway works with an emphasis on modal shift;
  - Provide infrastructure to support electric cars, car clubs and electric cycles.





# ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how best to integrate the new scheme into the urban edge of Bedford by respecting the local landscape and character of the surrounding settlements.

This Masterplan demonstrates the capacity for approximately 1,150 dwellings.

It has been informed by the Site's constraints, as well as the findings of the technical evidence.

The Development would build on the traditional form and be a mix of 2-3 storey houses that respond to the local character.

Land Use	Area (ha)
Residential	32.15ha
Education	2.2ha
Community Hub	0.5ha
Open space	29.15ha
Strategic Roads	6ha
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70ha</b>



Fig.12 - Barratts Development at Wixams

-  Red Line Boundary
-  Existing Road Infrastructure
-  Proposed Access Point
-  Proposed Primary Route
-  Proposed Secondary Routes
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed Cycle and Footpath Extension
-  Proposed Residential Use
-  Proposed Primary School
-  Proposed Local Centre
-  Informal Public Space
-  Formal Green Edges and Open Space
-  Central Green Corridor
-  Proposed Wildflower Meadow
-  Proposed Attenuation Ponds
-  Proposed Trees
-  Waterbody

Fig.13 - Illustrative Masterplan





# DELIVERY

The proposals set out in this document draw upon years of learning from BDW on the realities of development. This includes some of the most innovative and popular new places being built in Britain today. Recent schemes in the area include Great Denham and Wixams. These are popular schemes which are at the forefront in the placemaking agenda.

BDW are confident about the viability of the Site and issues such as build rates, income and infrastructure delivery have been considered. A mixed market for tenure and other means of delivery would be considered, including a commitment to starter homes, affordable and private rented, to maximise the offer to the community and market.

There is a single landowner for the Site with BDW, a housebuilder, having interest in the land. These present significant benefits as the Site can be delivered, without wider complexities affecting land within multiple ownership.

This site can be delivered at an accelerated rate as BDW are in a unique position when compared to other housebuilders having the ability to dual brand sites with both Barratt and David Wilson Homes. Dual branding results in two construction outlets both having their own sales centres and compounds. Furthermore, dual branding a site provides greater consumer choice providing high quality homes ranging from first time buyers to large luxury family homes. For example, in FY20/21 202 dwellings were delivered at Wixams despite the impacts on the market due to Covid-19, Brexit and materials shortages.

BDW have a strong record of delivery in Bedford through the schemes such as Great Denham and Wixams. Development on this Site can be delivered within a single plan period.





# CONCLUSION

This document sets out the case for the strategic western extension of Bedford. The Site would deliver a high-quality sustainable neighbourhood and bring considerable benefits through biodiversity and green infrastructure. A placemaking approach would draw on the character and heritage of the site and broader area.

The Site provides the opportunity to create a well-designed, safe environment, with easy access to services and facilities by foot. It is ideally placed to contribute to the supply of new homes needed in the District. The Development would respond sensitively to the historic and landscape environment, while providing the critical mass of development that can create a true community with a range of local services, including a local centre and primary school.

While the project is in its early stages, there is a clear commitment to deliver a scheme that is truly transformative and opens up development in this area of Bedford. The land is within the sole control of BDW and there are no known technical reasons why the site cannot come forward. The scheme is deliverable, and a high-level evaluation has been undertaken on its viability.

There is opportunity for significant development at west Bedford, which would deliver a wide range of benefits that would provide a sustainable future for the area. This Vision Document demonstrates the site can provide a comprehensive development proposal of approximately 1,150 units, and a significant amount of high-quality open space that supports the delivery of a biodiversity net gain target of 10%.

## NEXT STEPS

We are in the early stages of the development process and would like to see this as a collaborative process that fully engages the Council and current and future communities in setting out the priorities for the area, to bring forward an exemplary new place. We hope there will be many, wide-ranging opportunities to engage on this project, including design led events, citizens panels and public exhibitions. With the involvement of all parties working together, we can establish a vibrant new community to the west of Bedford that supports sustainable lifestyles for generations to come.



# BENEFITS



Provide approximately 1,150 high quality market and affordable homes to meet housing need



Provide a central community hub, with services and facilities for new and existing residents



Provision of a new primary school



Over 40% of the Site is proposed as Public Open Space



Sustainable connections into Bedford to reduce the need to travel via car



Support Bedford's role as a key settlement within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc



Meet the latest requirements for energy efficiency and CO<sup>2</sup> reduction to support to meeting "carbon neutrality by 2030"



Designed to reflect the wider landscape and reinforce the built character of the area



Provision of SuDS and sensitive water management



Reduce inequalities and enhance social wellbeing through housing and a new community



Provide net gain in biodiversity and a robust approach to surface water drainage



Housing in a location with a proven record of delivery and successful placemaking

For further information please  
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